

# *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*



## *Bindu*

Issue 585

*prema-pāśair baddhaś caurah*

*The Thief Bound with the Ropes of Love*







# Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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Unknown photographer

## KRISHNA'S BUSINESS



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Krishna's business in the neighborhood was not only to steal but sometimes to pass stool and urine in a neat, clean house. When caught by the master of the house, Krishna would chastise him, saying, "You are a thief." Aside from being a thief in his childhood affairs, Krishna acted as an expert thief when he was young by attracting young girls and enjoying them in the rāsa dance. This is Krishna's business. He is also violent, as the killer of many demons. Although mundane people like nonviolence and other such brilliant qualities, God, the Absolute Truth, being always the same, is good in any activities, even so-called immoral activities like stealing, killing and violence. Krishna is always pure, and he is always the Supreme Absolute Truth. Krishna may do anything supposedly abominable in material life, yet still he is attractive. Therefore, his name is Krishna, meaning "all-attractive". This is the platform on which transcendental loving affairs and service are exchanged. Because of the features of Krishna's face, the mothers were so attracted that they could not chastise him. Instead of chastising



Unknown photographer

him, they smiled and enjoyed hearing of Krishna's activities. Thus, the gopīs remained satisfied, and Krishna enjoyed their happiness. Therefore, another name of Krishna is Gopī-jana-vallabha because he invented such activities to please the gopīs. 🍌

— Purport to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. 10.8.31.

Cover: Mother Yashoda catches the butter thief. By Bamapada Banerjee. West Bengal. Circa 1900.

Vintage painting by an unknown artist.



## FEEDING THE MONKEYS



**Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja**

Mother Yashoda said to Gopal, “Your intelligence, your play, your activities, are like that of the monkeys. And you are with so many monkeys. Gopal, are you not afraid, surrounded by so many monkeys?”

Gopal said: “Mother, these monkeys helped Lord Rama. Rama was going to conquer Lanka and kill Ravan. The monkeys underwent severe tribulations, suffering, suffering, suffering. Lord Rama was wandering in the forest. He had no good food to give them. He had nothing. Sometimes they couldn’t get anything at all to eat. Sometimes they were jumping from one branch to another to get some fruit, and some days they might not have gotten anything, so they had to fast. Now see, mother, how they are stretching out their hands, begging for *mākhan*, ‘Give us, give us, give us *mākhan*.’ They are eating with so much delight.” This is such a wonderful sweet *līlā*. The Supreme Lord makes his devotees drown in the ocean of happiness, joyfulness, and pleasure.

Yashoda-mata, due to her *vātsalya-rasa*, parental love, forgot that Krishna is Bhagavan. She was only thinking how to make everything auspicious for her son, how to make her son happy. By the activity of *yoga-māyā*, she was only thinking, “My son, my son!” She was thinking only these kinds of thoughts. The *Bhāgavatam* (10.8.45) describes:

*trayyā copaniṣadbhīḥ ca sāṅkhya-yogaiḥ ca sātvataiḥ  
upagīyamāna mātmyam harim sāmānyatātmajam*

The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are studied throughout the three Vedas, the Upanishads, the literature of *sāṅkhya-yoga*, and other *vaiṣṇava* literature. Yet Mother Yashoda considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child.

Those who are *sāṅkhya-yogīs* engage in analytical discussion on him. Those who are devotees offer prayers to the Supreme Lord Krishna. But Mother Yashoda said, “He is my son! He is my son!” — *sāmānyatātmajam*. This is pure *vātsalya-rasa*. 🍌

— From *Mathura Meets Vrindavan*. Chapter 4. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar. 2003.

## THE THIEF IS FINALLY CAPTURED



**Ādi Purāṇa chapter 24**

*Krishna continues to relate to his devotee Narada Muni about his mischievous childhood pastimes in Vraja.*

Krishna said, “Dear Narada! Listen to what my friends, and I, and all the monkeys did early the next morning. We went to a particular *gopī*’s home and with cunning ways we obtained the milk, curd and butter there and started eating it. Just then the *gopī* arrived. Greatly astonished to see us, she said, ‘You naughty boy! What are you doing here? How did you get this pot down from such a great height? Where will you take all this curd and milk to?’

“I replied to the *gopī*, ‘O you who possesses all good virtues! Your younger brother who has not yet entered this world [hasn’t take birth yet] has invited



Painting by Shital Bandopadhyay, West Bengal. Circa 1900.

*Mātṛ-milana "meeting mother"*

me to your house to eat everything here. Since my poor friends cannot tolerate being without me, they have also accompanied me. They have already left. Since your brother forced me to, I am sleeping here in your home. When I got up from my sleep, I was determined to leave here without disturbing you. As I was leaving, I saw that pot which was overflowing with curd. So, I got the pot down and shooed all the ants away from it. You are not appreciating my attempt to save your curd and butter.'

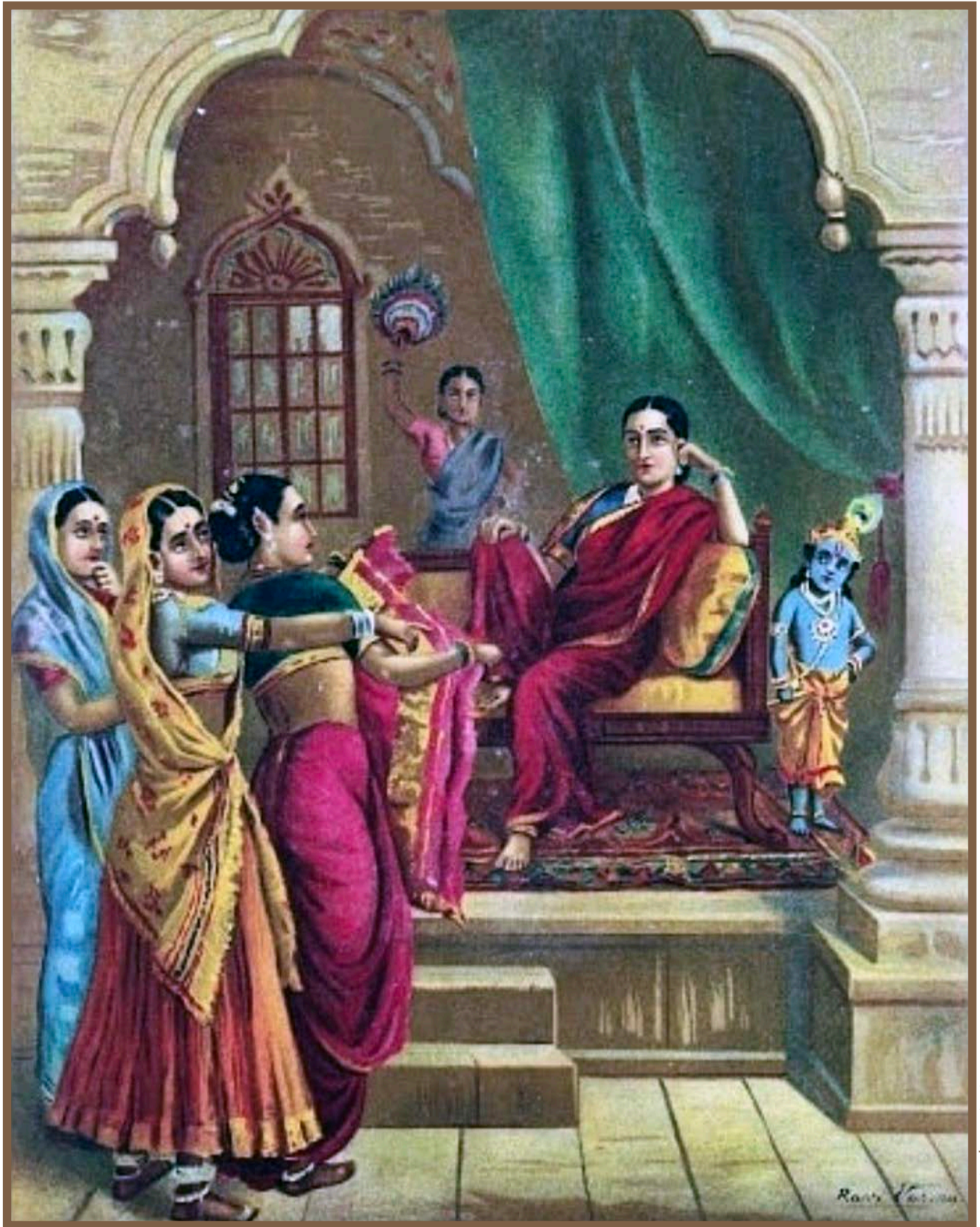
"Hearing my words, she was deceived, placed her hand on my head, and blessed me to have a long and happy life. I then left and went to another *gopī*'s house. As I entered her cottage, she was waiting, ready to catch me red-handed and take me to mother. She jumped up and said, 'Oh it's you! Come! Come! For what reason has the son of the king of Vraja entered the house of this poor *gopī*?' I replied to her, 'I am very tired. Let me get some rest and I will answer your question.' She allowed me to take some rest and later she asked for my answer to her question.

"I replied, 'You are very dear to my mother. You take care of her goshala. Call your sister here and I will tell her.'

"That *gopī* then went away to bring her sister. By the time she returned, my friends and I had eaten all the milk, curd, butter and ghee in her house. We fed whatever remained to the monkeys and escaped by the time she returned. When she came back to her house she looked around and searched for me. Not finding me anywhere and seeing the mess we had made, she spoke to her sister, 'Falling under his trap I left him alone in the house without anyone to watch over him. By the power of his magical eyes, I forgot reality. To whom can I complain about this?' She then showed her sister all of the naughty things that I did at her home and later took a nap.

"Dear Narada, I then entered the house of another *gopī*. Listen to the things that my friends and I did there. A group of *gopīs* were gathered there engaged in singing the glories of Vishnu with the help of different types of musical instruments. As I entered, all the *gopīs*

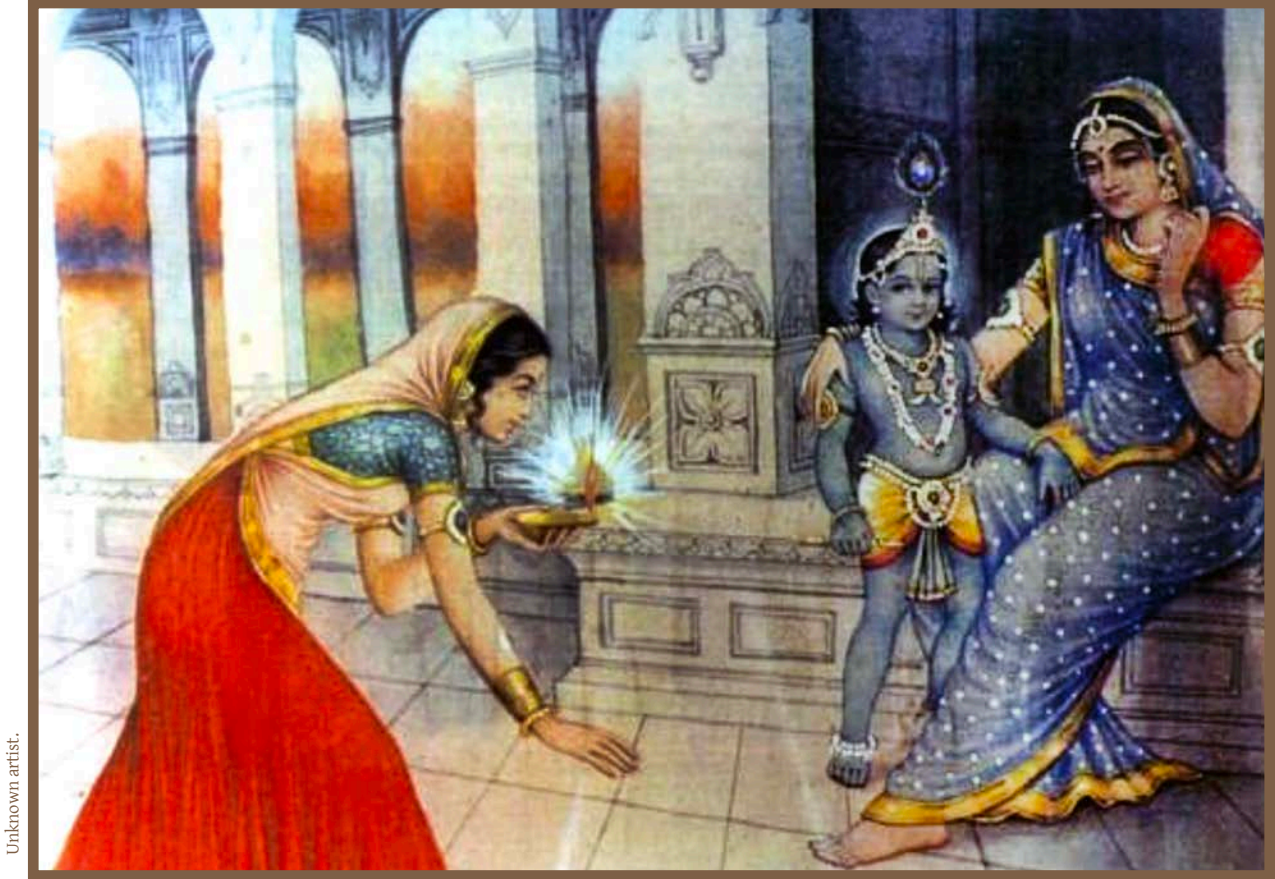




Painting by Ravi Raj Varma

*The gopīs complain to Yashoda about Krishna*





Unknown artist.

### A gopī offers a lamp to Krishna

jumped up and exclaimed, ‘The cowherd boy has come here along with his thief friends. From all four sides, let’s tie him up. Let’s not become fooled by his tricky words.’ They had secretly planned this. They left all their instruments on the ground and started chasing me around the house. As I was running from them, I spoke, ‘My dear mothers! Please listen to what I have to say. My mother and father sent me to you. There is an auspicious offering that is to be done at my house. They have invited all of you there. Please go there as soon as possible. Do not delay.’

“Hearing my words, those *gopīs* replied with happiness, ‘Dear Krishna, are you telling the truth? Or are you lying to us?’

“I replied, ‘I never say anything that is not true. I do not know how to lie.’ My cowherd friends then spoke up, ‘Whatever Krishna is telling is the truth. Please believe him!’. All the *gopīs* got excited to attend the festival and they went away to the palace.

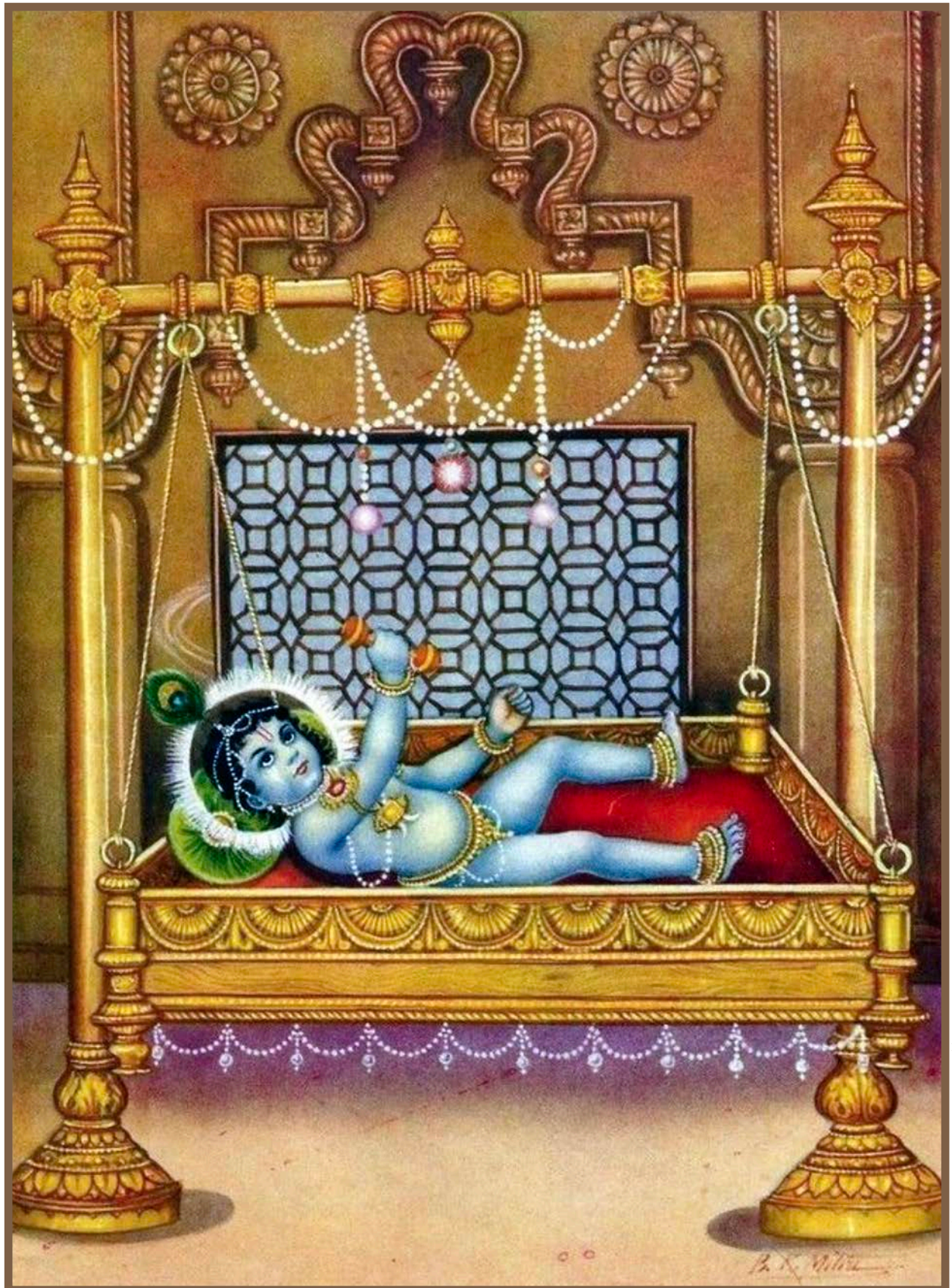
“As soon as they left, we went inside and ate all the sweets, treats, milk, curd, butter and ghee. They were all delicious. After they had all eaten to their satisfaction, the cowherd boys went after the *gopīs*

who had left, and told them, ‘There is no festival in Nanda Baba’s house! Where are you all headed? Krishna fooled all of you! No one invited you people. All of you should return to your homes.’

“The *gopīs* spoke among themselves, ‘God knows what these boys have done to our houses. None of us realized that they were just the dear messengers of Krishna. We stopped our *bhajan* halfway through. All our milk and curd are probably in the tummies of these boys. What do we do now? Who do we complain to? Oh, that naughty boy! How quickly he fooled all of us! This boy is the apple of the eyes of Nanda and Yashoda. They do not believe us! Nanda Baba does not punish his son at all. That is why that little monkey does all this mischief. His parents do not believe us at all. What should we do now? Yashoda is blinded with love for her son. She won’t believe us. We must speak very carefully to Nanda Maharaja with the utmost respect so that we do not offend a great devotee of Vishnu like him.’

“As they discussed like this, the *gopīs* returned to their homes and started to tidy up. After some time, they again sat down to sing *bhajans* for Lord Vishnu. I went away from that place along with my cowherd boys and monkey friends.





Painting by B. K. Mitra. Gita Press, Gorakhpur

*Baby Krishna in his crib*





Yashoda holds Krishna

“One *gopī* was seated on a soft seat outside of her house, guarding the house. I slowly crawled to her and put my hands over her eyes. She did not realize it was me and started guessing the names of her various relatives. Seeing this, another *gopī* started to tease her. By this time all my friends were going into her house to get all the pots of milk and curd. I removed my hands from her eyes. As soon as she saw me, she started to shout at me, ‘Who are you? Who are you?’ As she was shouting like this, my friends and I ran away from there.

“I then went to the house of another *gopī* and saw that she was standing right next to the door. I told her that my mother sent me to graze all the calves in the village. And that she must free the calves in her cow shed so that I can take them to Govardhan for grazing. She was happy with me and went to do what was said. As soon as she left, we entered her house. We ate all the sweets and drank all the milk in the house and came outside. When she returned, she said, ‘I have freed all the calves because Krishna asked me to do so. But where did all the boys go?’

“One *gopī* replied to her, ‘Those boys already took all the milk and curd and ran away from your house!’ The first *gopī* worriedly entered her home and found all the pots of milk were empty and broken. She began to lament and shouted, ‘O *gopī* friends! Just see what this Krishna has done in my house! Where did Nanda’s

son learn to act like this? Even though I am older than him, I have been fooled by him. This boy seemed so innocent to me, but it does not seem so now. Along with his monkey friends he has looted all the eatables from my house. I was fooled by him because he came to me so sweetly with such care and affection and asked me how many calves I had and said that he would take them out for grazing so that I can get some rest at home. I was fooled and then they looted my house. Even though so many things have happened, still Yashoda will never believe us. Whatever has happened is by the will of Lord Vishnu. I should not lament about this.’ She then went back inside her house.

“That *gopī* who had a most beautiful face then went inside her house and began singing my pastimes. I was not done yet, dear Narada. I was in the mood to create more mischief. So, I went to the house of another *gopī*. She was sleeping outside her house. We snuck inside and very quietly drank all the milk and ate all the butter.

“That *gopī* was having a dream that I was eating the butter in her house. She caught me in her dream and was shouting at me. She was talking in her sleep. My friends and I were laughing at her as we ate the butter. [In her sleep] she said, ‘You boys have been stealing from our houses for a long time. You trick us and escape from us. I am going to immediately



## STEALING FROM THE DEVAS IN VRAJA

Srila Jiva Goswami’s  
Śrī-gopāla-campūḥ 1.7.48

*indriya-kulam atigūḍhaṁ netrādy-anta-nigūḍham evāsti  
tan-madhyād api cittam harato nṛ-harer na hāryam kim?*

All the sense *devatās* reside hidden within the senses in Golok. Among them, the mind is stolen by Krishna. If that is so, what else can he not steal?

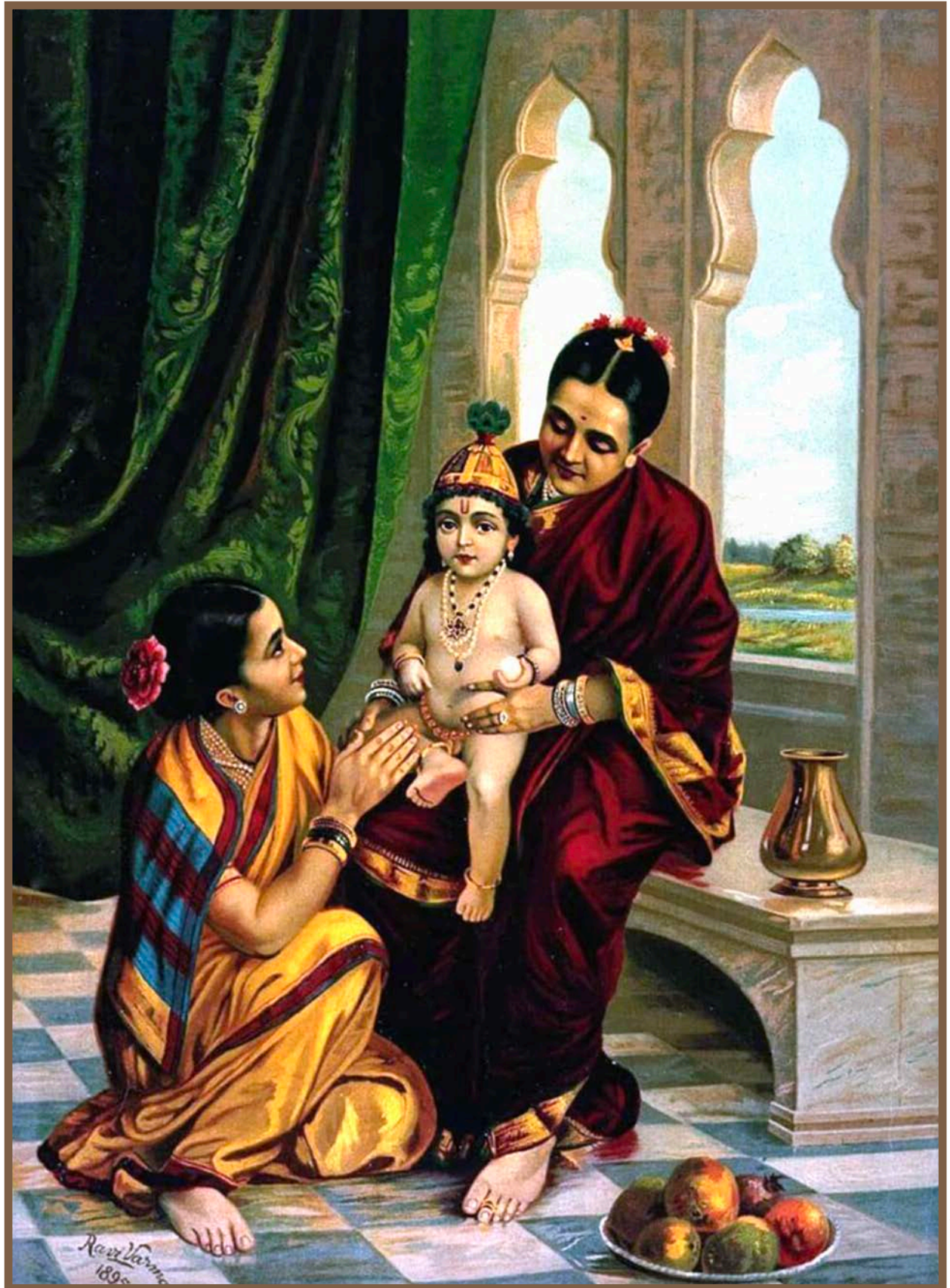
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Painting by Ravi Raj Varma

*The gopīs adore Krishna*





*Krishna Balaram and the cowherd boys taking care of the calves*

take you to Yashoda!’ She suddenly woke from her sleep and seeing us before her, her mouth dropped open wide. We immediately ran away. The *gopī* saw me in her house in the same way that she saw me in the dream. She brought all her *gopī* friends to her house and said to them, ‘This naughty little Krishna entered my house and stole all the milk and butter. He has been cheating us for a long time. No *gopī* has yet been successful in fully describing his mischievous activities. What can I say? To whom do I complain about this? Every *gopī* in this village has been cheated by Krishna. This boy steals every drop of milk and butter. He doesn’t leave anything behind.’ While these *gopīs* were discussing like this we went to the house of another *gopī*.

‘This *gopī* was playing with her younger brother on the bed and was singing my glories to him. As soon as she saw me, she got up from the bed and offered me a seat. She said that my friends and I can sit at her house. She requested me not to leave there. She asked me, ‘Dear Krishna, why have you come to my house? Whatever you want to take from my house you can have it. Should I do something for you, my dear Kanha? Please instruct me. I will never go against your words.’

‘I said, ‘My dear *gopī*! I have come to your house because you are my best friend. My friends are very hungry. So please give us something to eat. Please give us some butter to eat or some milk to drink.’ The *gopī* was very happy as I claimed her to be my best friend and brought all the milk that was in her house and gave it to my friends and I with faith and love. Our stomachs were all full as we drank the milk. O Narada! I was very happy with her faith and love. We drank all the milk and curd that *gopī* gave us. My friends and I then gave a lot of milk and curd to the monkeys as well. I felt compassion for that *gopī*. By my power, all the milk and curd in her house became infinite. Whatever my devotees wholeheartedly give me without trying to protect or save it, will always be in abundance in their home. Whereas, whatever they miserly save will get destroyed then and there.

‘Dear Narada! In this way I performed my pastimes in Gokul. The *gopīs* who hid the milk and curd from me, I stole from them by thievery and mischievous ways. I then destroyed everything at their homes. Whatever is given in alms will always be in abundance at one’s home. Whatever is present in the material world has come from me. Whoever miserly saves money and food and does not serve it to me or his guests are thieves





Vintage poster print. Unknown artist.

*Krishna rides on the back of Mother Yashoda*





*Balaram gives Krishna a ride on his back*

for sure. I ate all the milk and curd of the *gopīs* who hid it from me. The *gopī* who gave me milk and curd with love and affection always had abundant milk and curd at her house even after my friends and I feasted at her house. Like this, I tested every household's *gopīs* as I roamed around Gokul. Every *gopa*, *gopī*, cow, creeper, flower and worm are instruments for my happiness in Gokul. Any person who thinks of the residents of Vraja and myself as different is a fool and will not achieve peace in any of the three worlds.

"All of us ate to our heart's content and then went to the house of another *gopī*. As we entered her place, she suddenly gathered all the *gopīs* out of her house and locked the door trapping us inside. She said that she would hand me over to my mother proving that we had stolen all the milk, curd, butter and ghee. My friends were frightened and ran away leaving me to be the only one captured.

The *gopīs* were speaking, 'After many days of struggle, we have finally caught Krishna. O Krishna! Where will you run to now? No one is there to help you now! We have caught you! You have been escaping from us for a long time. Even the most skillful thief must get caught one day. Since you have been trapped inside the house we have to give you proper punishment.' Threatening me like this, the *gopīs* surrounded me and were glaring at me with loving anger. Having butter and curd in my hands I suddenly threw it in the eyes of the *gopīs*. I thus escaped from their grasp and teased them. Dear *gopīs*! Was your plan successful? Or did it fail? Regardless of how hard they tried, whoever has tried to catch me has never been able to. How can the *gopīs* be successful? I can only be bound by the ropes of love. So if anyone wants to tie me up to their hearts they have to use the ropes of love.





Unknown artist. South India. Circa 1980s.

*A gopī discovers Krishna and his friends stealing butter and yoghurt*





Nanda Maharaja holds Krishna

“The *gopīs* said to me, ‘O Sri Krishna! Who taught you to be this naughty and mischievous? No one has taken birth on this earth who can outsmart you! Nor will any such person ever take birth in the future! Your friends never stay in one place. They are always roaming about causing mischief. Therefore, the parents who should be showing love to their children are always finding a way to punish them. You were born to your parents when they were quite old, so they never punish you. As a result, you are very stubborn and roam around Gokul without any fear. You enter everyone’s house and break everything in their possession. No matter how hard we try we are not able to catch you. At last, we have finally succeeded in catching you. Every day, you enter someone’s house and create a mess. Who can bear all the mischief caused by you? Yashoda never punishes you because she is blinded by love for you.’” 🍌

— English translation by Yashoda Pavani Dasi from *Ādi Purāṇa*, with Hindi translation. Published by Khemraj. 1929.

### CLOSING THOUGHTS THE PURPORT OF TWO FINGERS



Srila Sukadev Goswami describes in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.9.17:

*evam sva-geha-dāmāni yaśodā sandadhaty api  
gopīnām susmayantīnām smayantī vismitābhavat*

Thus, Mother Yashoda joined whatever ropes were available in the household, but still she failed in her attempt to bind Krishna. Mother Yashoda’s friends, the elderly *gopīs* in the neighborhood, were smiling and enjoying the fun. Similarly, Mother Yashoda, although laboring in that way, was also smiling. All of them were struck with wonder.

In his comments on this verse, Srila Prabhupada says:

Actually, this incident was wonderful because Krishna was only a child with small hands. To bind him should have required only a rope not more than two feet long. All the





Vintage poster print. Unknown artist.

### Krishna begs butter from Yashoda

ropes in the house combined together might have been hundreds of feet long, but still he was impossible to bind, for all the ropes together were still too short. Naturally Mother Yashoda and her *gopī* friends thought, “How is this possible?” Seeing this funny affair, all of them were smiling. The first rope was short by a measurement the width of two fingers, and after the second rope was added, it was still two fingers too short. If the shortness of all the ropes were added together, it must have amounted to the width of hundreds of fingers. Certainly this was astonishing. This was another exhibition of Krishna’s inconceivable potency to his mother and his mother’s friends.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur elucidates on this verse in his *Sārārtha Darśini* commentary:

All the elderly *gopīs* in the neighborhood were laughing (*gopīnāṁ susmayantīnām*). In her astonishment (*vismitā*), Yashoda thought, “A rope of one hundred *hastas* (150 feet) does not fit around my son’s waist which measures only one fist. His small waist is not getting any bigger, and the rope is certainly not getting any shorter. But still the rope does not reach around him. This is the first amazing thing. Furthermore, when I tie the ropes together, each time it is two fingers short, not three or four fingers. That is the second amazing thing.”

In his explanation on the next verse (*Bhāg.* 10.9.18), Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur explains that there is an esoteric significance of the rope always being two fingers short. He explains that to bind the Lord, two things are required: *bhakta-niṣṭhā bhajanotthā* — there must be some endeavor on the part of the devotee, and; *darśanotthā sva-niṣṭhā kṛpā* — there must be mercy from the Lord. Without these two the rope will always be two inches short. Vishwanath says, *sarva-śakti-cakravartinī parama-bhāsvatī kṛpā-śaktir* — “Of all the potencies of the Lord, this *kṛpā-śakti*, mercy potency,

is the emperor.” Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti goes on to explain, *bhakta bhagavator madhye bhakta haṭha eva tiṣṭhendi tāto* — “In the competition between Krishna and his devotee, the devotee’s determination always prevails. Therefore, seeing his mother’s exhaustion, Krishna became merciful and allowed himself to be bound up by her. In his commentary on the 19th verse in that chapter, Vishwanath writes: *kṛpā-śaktir eva bhagavac cittam navanītamiva* — “Krishna’s mercy melts the heart of the Lord and turns it into soft butter.” The mercy potency makes the Lord’s *satya saṅkalpa-śakti*, the power of his honest word and determination, and his *vibhūti-śakti*, power of opulence, disappear. The two finger distance short was filled by the devotee’s endeavor and hard work, *parīśrama*, and *kṛpā-kṛpā*, the Lord’s mercy. When the *bhakta-niṣṭhā*, firm conviction of the devotee, and the *sva-niṣṭhā* conviction of the Lord combine, then the Lord becomes bound up.

In his *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda similarly explains what he calls, *vraja-bhajanera rahasya*, a secret of Vraja bhajan. He says regarding the obstacles represented by the demons killed by *ādi-guru* Balaram — *sādhaka nija yatnāgraha kṛpā kṛpāya dūra* — the *sādhaka* must remove them by his own efforts coupled with the mercy of Krishna. *dainya sabala haile avasya kṛpā-kṛpā haya* — If one’s humility is genuine, then certainly Krishna will be merciful. 🍌

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## READER'S LETTERS TO BINDU

### Regarding issue 582, Bhakti and Independent Thinking:

Teachers who train their subordinates to think independently for the ultimate benefit of one and all, they only are the real teachers, and they are the rarest of all. — Bhaktin Dorothea. Radhadesh, Belgium.

Thank you so much for this issue of Bindu. I so strongly wish that young devotees and their





*Krishna dragged the mortar between the two trees and freed Nalakuvara and Manigriva*

authorities can have access to this when they are training new *bhaktas*. Many times, in our society we teach young devotees that independent mentality is the cause of bondage, the reason why we fell into the material world, and why we continue to be here. While there is some truth to the dangers of whimsical or irresponsible independence, it's just one side of the truth. There has been so much intellectual suffocation because of that, so much of which could be avoided if the points in this issue of *Bindu* were more familiar.

I came across the term "independently thoughtful" only after spending several such years in my *bhakti* practice. Though I had probably heard several hundred classes in Krishna consciousness, up to that point not one person ever mentioned this topic or even the term. We were taught that the essence of Krishna consciousness was following the instructions of the authorities. While that is definitely part of it, sometimes it is presented as being the most essential aspect. I hope that many devotees can be saved from feeling that their intellectual concerns are always signs of intellectual deviation by the points raised in this issue.

A second consideration is that the younger generation today has an enormous need for autonomy. Recently

I read a description of the difference between a left-wing person and a liberal. Many times in India they are equated. The Indian media presents that the left-liberal establishment is against Hinduism or Indian traditions. However, it is the left that is against hierarchy and desires to bring about equality, whereas the liberals only want autonomy. The left want to destroy the hierarchy. Liberals are not against the hierarchy but they want autonomy to do their own thing. While a few youth may be leftist, most of them today tend to be liberal — young boys and girls who want to get married on their own. It's not that they deliberately want to disrespect their parents or destroy the patriarchy — some may — yet many respect their parents; they just want their own space to lead their life. Autonomy is very much prized today. Of course, youth need guidance, but guidance can easily become a mask for control — if we as a movement don't learn to give today's youth autonomy to some degree, we are unlikely to attract many thoughtful young people; or even if we attract them we are not going to be able to sustain them. Therefore, this topic of independently thoughtful is very much needed in today's world



when doing youth outreach. Some of the conventional means of outreach in our movement are becoming less effective. By reading this issue, we can be assured that respecting people's autonomy isn't just a concession for the times; it's also a closer alignment with our tradition.

Thirdly, I find that I always appreciate in *Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu* the tone you adopt when addressing delicate topics. When some speakers take a topic, it seems that they have a personal or institutional agenda, and they speak on the topic to fulfil that agenda. For example, some managers speak in class about the importance of having a proper service attitude, which is used (or abused) to make their subordinates more compliant and obedient to their instructions. Authorities may call for cooperation to end dissent. But the way you deal with topics in *Krishna Kathamrita Bindu*, it doesn't come off as having any anti-institutional or anti-authority agenda. I think that's because of three reasons. The first is the history of intellectual service and credibility that *Sri Krishna Kathamrita* magazine has. The second is the profusion of apt scriptural quotes, and the third is the overall non-controversial nature of the magazine.

All my very best wishes and prayers that you continue doing this enormous service for our community, and that any obstacles you are facing in consolidating and expanding your service be soon



*Krishna pulls on his mother while she is churning butter*

removed by the mercy of Guru and Gauranga. Hare Krishna. – Chaitanya Charan Das, Radha Gopinath Mandir, Mumbai.

#### **Bindu makes you smile:**

Every time I get an email with the latest issue of *KK Bindu*, I smile. That is the heart rejoicing for the opportunity to hear about Krishna from a bona fide source. And the art! The art is so beautifully curated in every issue of this zine!

In a world where bad news seems to have no end, I take shelter in *kṛṣṇa-kathā* to keep me sane and enthusiastic. *KK Bindu* is one of my fav sources for that. Do you want to smile more? Read *Sri Krishna-Kathamrita Bindu*! – Kaveri Dasi NYC 🍌

#### **SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU**

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